Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - PFLP

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Orientation/Goals:

(U) Originally founded as a fervently Marxist organization, the PFLP advocated a two-step process of revolution within the Palestinian movement as a prelude to Marxist revolutions in Arab states. Continuous revolutionary violence was considered the only way to maintain the urgency of the Palestinian cause, liberate the entire Palestinian homeland as delineated under the British Mandate, destroy Israel, and establish a secular, democratic state in the ruins. International terrorism was seen as an integral part of a war of national liberation.

(U) LOGO, 1979

(U) As a founder of the Rejection Front in 1974, the PFLP rejected the "capitulationist" PLO position which accepted an interim, limited Palestinian entity on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In addition, it excluded all initiatives leading to a negotiated settlement, as these implicitly recognized Israeli legitimacy. At the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front summit in Tripoli in December 1977, the Rejection Front policy of no negotiations, no recognition of Israel, and no acceptance of UN Resolution 242 was accepted by all Palestinian groups.

(U) In 1977, however, some PFLP leaders admitted that they would welcome the establishment of a Palestinian authority over any part of Palestine, if only to use as a base for the struggle against Israel. Although Rejection Front groups, including the PFLP, asserted that they would not rejoin PLO fora until steadfastness planks were incorporated into the Palestinian national program by the Palestine National Council (PNC), they all attended the January 1979 PNC session whose achievements fell short of their goal. While expressing disappointment with particular PNC results, however, the PFLP generally praised the "unity" evinced by the Palestinian movement. PFLP leader George Habash called for the PLO to join Syria and Iraq in a program of mass mobilization and confrontation with the Zionist enemy in all sectors--political, economic, and cultural. Rather than grouping military forces haphazardly together for a quick war the Arabs were sure to lose, Habash declared his intent to draw up a sound confrontation program in order to create the objective conditions for a strategic confrontation.

(U) New strains in the Arab world, especially the rift between Syria and Iraq exacerbated by the Iraq-Iran War, have clouded the PFLP's vision of Arab unity. Notwithstanding the difficulties in adapting to shifting political loyalties, the PFLP has remained as obdurate as ever. It continues to oppose the stationing of United Nations troops in Lebanon on the grounds that this interferes with the right of the Palestinian resistance to attack the Zionist enemy from wherever it wishes. It opposes any dialog with Jordan, claiming that King Husayn's disapproval of the Camp David accords is merely a disguise for his pro-imperialist leanings, and called for his overthrow.

(U) The PFLP maintains a firm pro-Soviet foreign policy line and defended the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, asserting that western disapproval was a device to hide imperialism's aggressive designs on the Near East and the Iranian Revolution.

Organization:

(U) The PFLP has a party structure similar to that of the Soviet Communist Party and is headed by a central committee with cells at the base. Functional

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